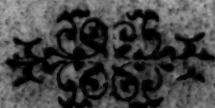


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1-6
PRACTICAL DISCOURSE
CONCERNING
BAPTISM,

On the following HEADS:

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|--|---|
| I. The NATURE of
Christian Baptism,
with its PRIVILE-
GES. | III. The OBLIGATI-
ONS of those who are
baptized. |
| II. The QUALIFICA-
TIONS useful to
the worthy recei-
ving it. | IV. A PERSUASIVE,
or EXHORTATION
to Baptism. |
| | V. A SERIOUS ADDRESS
to such as have been
baptized. |

By WILLIAM FOOT.



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THE
PREFACE.

THough several Writers of the Baptist-Denomination have performed well on the Controversy relating to Baptism ; yet there is no one of them, that I know of, who has published a practical Treatise on this practical Subject. In some Measure to supply this manifest Defect, I venture abroad this small Tract. It will, I hope, appear adapted to promote Piety and Virtue. And if some such Treatise were put into the Hands of sober-minded Persons, who, though inclined to their Duty, are yet kept back by groundless Fears, or other insufficient Reasons ; I hope it might be useful. Since we reckon this a Service designed for those who are come to Years of Understanding ; why is it not as proper they should be exhorted and persuaded to

64 A 2 this,

iv The PREFACE.

this, as to any other Point of Duty? Or, Why may not a practical Discourse on Baptism be expedient, as well as on the Lord's Supper?

I have nothing to add; but that in those few Places where I have touched on Controversy, I have taken Care to express my self so gently, that no Party or Person, I hope, has Room to be offended.

W. FOOT.

A

A
PRACTICAL DISCOURSE
CONCERNING
BAPTISM.

AS Baptism is an Institution of Christ, importing both *Privilege* and *Duty* unto the Person baptized, it deserves our attentive Consideration in both these Respects. And because, in many Congregations, there may be honest, conscientious People, who, though they believe it an Ordinance of the Gospel, yet, by some Means or other, live in the Neglect of it; on this Account a *Persuasive*, or *Exhortation* to the Receiving it, will not be judged unnecessary.

That I may therefore contribute (if God shall prosper the Attempt) to the Assistance of pious and well disposed
A 3
Minds

Minds in a *practical* View of this Ordinance, and to convince those of their Fault, who, believing adult Baptism to be the only Christian Baptism, yet are not careful to receive it; I would offer to Consideration some Thoughts on the following Heads.

I. The *Nature* of Christian Baptism, with the *Privileges* thereunto annexed.

II. The *Qualifications*, or *Preparations* necessary to the due receiving it.

III. The *Obligations* of the Baptized.

IV. A *Persuasive*, or *Exhortation* to Baptism.

V. A *serious Address* to those who have been baptized.

C H A P. I.

Of the NATURE of Christian Baptism, and the PRIVILEGES thereunto annexed.

AS to the *Nature* of Christian Baptism ; it is a sacred Rite of divine Appointment, by which we confess and acknowledge our selves the Disciples of *Jesus Christ*, and are devoted to his Service. We are baptized in the Name of the *Father*, and of the *Son*, and of the *Holy Ghost*, agreeably to our Lord's Commission for the Administration of Baptism. We thereby declare and own for our selves, that we chuse *God* for our *God*, to live in Subjection and Obedience to him ^a. We thereby declare our Belief in *Jesus Christ*, as the *Son* of *God*, and Saviour of the *World* ; and that we are willing and resolved to be his Disciples. We also profess our Belief in the *Holy Ghost*, as the Sancti-

^a Matt. xxviii. 19.

fier; and our Desire and Resolution to live under his Influence and Direction.

With respect to the *Manner* of Baptizing: it must be performed by *Immersion*^b, or covering the whole Body in Water. In this Manner only is it fitted to represent what St. Paul tells us is represented by it, viz. our Death unto Sin, and rising to Newness of Life. *Therefore we are buried with him by Baptism into Death, that like as Christ was raised up from the Dead by the Glory of the Father, even so we also should*

^b It is worthy of a Remark; That in 2 Kings v. 14. where we have an Account of Naaman's dipping himself in Jordan for the Cure of his Leprosy, the Hebrew Word טָבַח (which we rightly translate *dip*, and accordingly is almost constantly render'd in the LXX by βαπτω) is translated by the LXX, βαπτίζω. They did not think of any such Ambiguity in the Word, as might render it doubtful to Greek Readers, whether Naaman were dip'd or sprinkled. It may be worth the learned Reader's Observation, how much alike the Greek is in the two Cases of Naaman's being dip'd, and the Eunuch's Baptism. 2 Kings v. 14. Καὶ κατέβη Ναμαν καὶ ἐβαπτίσθη ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ. Acts viii. 38. Καὶ κατέβησαν — ἐς τὸ ὕδωρ — καὶ ἐβαπτίσεν αὐτόν. I find βαπτίζω but once more in the LXX; where it undoubtedly signifies to *cover* or *overwhelm*. Isa. xxi. 4. Ἡ ἀνομία με βαπτίζει, Iniquity doth overwhelm me.

walk

walk in Newness of Life. “ This latter
 “ Expression (says Bishop Hoadly, if he
 be, as reputed, the Author of *The*
Plain Account, &c.^d) “ with relation to
 “ Baptism, is taken from the Custom
 “ of *Immersion* in the first Days, and
 “ from that particular Manner of bap-
 “ tizing Profelytes; by which they were
 “ first covered with Water, and in a
 “ State as it were of *Death* and *Inacti-*
 “ *vity*; and then arose out of it into
 “ a Sort of new State of *Life* and *Action*.
 “ And if *Baptism* had been then per-
 “ formed as it is now amongst us, we
 “ should never have so much as heard
 “ of this Form of Expression, of *dying*
 “ and *arising* again in this Rite.”

Dr. Clarke, in his *Essay on Baptism*,
 p. 16. calls the descending into the Wa-
 ter, and rising out of it again, *That*
main Part of the Ceremony; and ex-
 plains the forementioned Passage of St.
Paul thus: “ The Design of our de-
 “ scending into the Water to be bap-
 “ tized, and rising again out of it, was
 “ to mind us, That as we then recei-
 “ ved Remission of our past Sins, by
 “ Virtue of Christ’s having died for Sin;

^c Rom. vi. 4.

^d Page 150. Edit. 3d.

10 *A Practical Discourse*

“ so we our selves were, in like Man-
 “ ner, to die and be buried to Sin, and
 “ to rise again, to walk for the future
 “ with Christ, in Newness and Holiness
 of Life.”

Having

“ It is foreign to the Design of this Book to
 expatiate on the Controversy between us and our
 Brethren of the Pædo-baptist Persuasion. But
 since, by reason of the Prevalence of *Sprinkling*,
 the primitive *Immersion* is, with many, grown into
 Contempt; it may help to remove the popular
 Derision which lies upon us for adhering to the
ancient and scriptural Way of Baptizing, if, to
 the Authors already mentioned, I add two or
 three more; whose Concessions in our Favour,
 cannot be supposed to arise from any partial Re-
 gard to us. “ Anciently (says Archbishop Til-
 lotson) “ those who were baptized, put off their
 “ Garments; which signified the putting off the
 “ Body of Sin; and were *immersed* and *buried* in
 “ the Water, to represent their Death of Sin;
 “ and then did rise up again out of the Water,
 “ to signify their Entrance upon a new Life.
 “ And to these Customs the Apostle alludes,
 “ when he says, *Rom. vi. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. How shall*
 “ *we that are dead to Sin, live any longer therein?*
 “ *Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized*
 “ *into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his Death?*
 “ *Therefore we are buried with him by Baptism*
 “ *into Death, that, &c.*” Tillot. Vol. I. p. 82.
 Edit. Fol.

“ By the first Teaching (saith Bishop Burnet)
 “ or *making of Disciples*, that must go before
 “ Baptism, is to be meant, the convincing the
 “ World

concerning BAPTISM. II

Having thus briefly represented the Nature of Christian Baptism; I proceed to consider its Privileges.

The Ist Privilege is, The *Forgiveness of Sins.*

The

“ World, that *Jesus* is the *Christ*, the true *Messias*, anointed of God, with a Fulness of Grace and of the Spirit without Measure, and sent to be the Saviour and Redeemer of the World. And when any were brought to acknowledge this, then they were to baptize them, to initiate them to this Religion, by obliging them to renounce all Idolatry and Ungodliness, as well as all secular and carnal Lusts: and they led them into the Water, and with no other Garments but what might cover Nature; they at first laid them down in the Water, as a Man is laid in a Grave; and then they said those Words, *I baptize* or wash thee in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Then they raised them up again, and clean Garments were put on them: from whence came the Phrases of being baptized into *Christ's Death*; of being buried with him by Baptism, into Death; of our being risen with *Christ*; and of our putting on the Lord *Jesus Christ*; of putting off the old Man, and putting on the new. After Baptism was thus performed, the baptized Person was to be farther instructed in all the Specialties of the Christian Religion; and in all the Rules of Life that *Christ* had prescribed.” Vid. *Exposit. on Artic. xxvii. p. 300. Edit. 3d.*

The

The Scripture evidently teacheth us to consider Baptism as attended with this. Thus we learn, from the *Acts of the Apostles*, when that great Company were pricked in their Heart at the Preaching of *Peter*, and said unto him and to the rest of the Apostles, Men

The last Passage I shall cite, is from Dr. *Whitby*. His Note on *Rom. vi. 4.* is thus: "It being so expressly declared here, and *Coloss. ii. 12.* "That we are buried with Christ in Baptism, by being buried under Water: and the Argument to oblige us to a Conformity to his Death, by dying to Sin, being taken hence; and this Immersion being religiously observ'd by all Christians for thirteen Centuries, and approved by our Church, and the Change of it unto Sprinkling, even without any Allowance from the Author of this Institution, or any Licence from any Council of the Church, being that which the Romanist still urgeth to justify his Refusal of the Cup to the Laity: it were to be wished that this Custom might be again of general Use; and Asperision only permitted, as of old, in Case of the Clinici, or in present Danger of Death."

These Testimonials may have the more Weight, in that they all come from Divines of prime Note of the *Pædo-baptist* Persuasion. I beg Leave only to add on the forementioned Words of Dr. *Clarke*, That if Immersion be, as he allows, a main Part of the Ceremony, then that Baptism must be very imperfect, which wanteth this Main Part.

and

and Brethren, *What shall we do?* Peter told them, *Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the Remission of Sins^f.* So Ananias, being sent by the Lord Jesus unto Paul, upon his miraculous Conversion, says to him; *And now, why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized, and wash away thy Sins^g.* These are plain Proofs, that Baptism is for the Remission of Sins, or that the Remission of Sins is annexed to Baptism. But when I say, Baptism is for the Forgiveness of Sins, I do not suppose any Thing like a *Charm* in it: but the plain, rational Notion of it may be illustrated thus. Suppose you have been guilty of Rebellion, and your Prince, in great Goodness, is pleased to promise a Pardon, on Condition you manifest a Sorrow for your Crime, and give it under your Hand and Seal that you renounce it, and will behave, for the future, becoming a dutiful Subject. Here, 'tis evident, your Pardon is annexed to your signing and sealing this Covenant. Now as Baptism is appointed of God, for the Remission of Sins, I take it to be of much the same Nature and Signifi-

^f Acts viii. 38.

^g Chap. xxii. 16.

14. *A Practical Discourse*

cancy as the setting our Hand and Seal. So there is nothing in the Matter but what is very intelligible and plain. And like as your Prince would not forgive your Rebellion, but conceive a just Indignation against you, if he could know your Heart did not agree with these outward Signs: so God, who searcheth the Heart, will account our Baptism nothing, and not annex to it the Forgiveness of Sins, if it be not accompanied *with the Answer, or Stipulation, of a good Conscience towards him*: agreeable to the Words of St. Peter; *Baptism doth also now save us; not the putting away of the Filth of the Flesh, but the Answer of a good Conscience towards God*^h.

And now who can fully set forth the Value of this Privilege, the Forgiveness of Sins? Sin is the Enemy we have most Cause to fear: for it separates us from him, without whom it is impossible to be happy: it lays us open to the Resentment of God Almighty, before whose Indignation none can stand. Could the Earth be a pleasant Habitation; could it afford any Comfort, without the Light and Warmth of the Sun?

^h 1 Pet. iii. 21.

No ; nothing but Darknes and univer-
sal Desolation must ensue. In like Man-
ner, if we are separated from God, the
great Original of Light, and Life,
and Happiness ; nothing but Desolation
and Misery, nothing but weeping, and
wailing, and gnashing of Teeth, must
be the Consequence. Since therefore
Sin unpardoned excludes us from God,
and effectually bars the Way to all Hap-
piness ; blessed is he whose Iniquities are
forgiven : *Even as David also describeth
the Blessedness of the Man, unto whom
God imputeth Righteousness without
Works ; saying, Blessed are they whose
Iniquities are forgiven, and whose Sins
are covered ; blessed is the Man to whom
the Lord will not impute Sinⁱ. Son, be
of good Cheer, said Christ to the Sick of
the Palsy ; thy Sins be forgiven thee^k.*
Nothing affords so much Reason as this,
for being of good Comfort. Is there
any Thing so cheering to a condemned
Criminal, as the Promise of a Pardon ?
Offer him the most desirable Things in
the World, the most costly and exqui-
site Entertainments of the Eye, or Ear,
or Palate ; yet, while the Sentence of

ⁱ Rom. iv. 6, 7, 8.

^k Matt. ix. 2.

Condemnation abides on him, all will be insipid and worthless: but let him know, his *Transgression*, on which *Death* hath been pronounced, is forgiven; and this will turn a Prison into a Palace; this will make him rejoice, and be exceeding glad. And thus the Man, who well considers *the Wages of Sin is Death*, even Death eternal, and that it is a Thing fearful beyond Conception, *to fall into the Hands of the living God*¹, will rejoice in it as an unspeakable Favour, that God hath reconciled him to himself, and doth not impute his Trespases unto him. And this is what the sincere Disciple of *Christ* hath Ground to hope for, even though he be conscious of the most numerous and aggravated Offences: for *Jesus*, whom, in Baptism, he hath received, and in whom he trusteth, *is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make Intercession for them*^m. Was there such a Promise unto God's rebellious People under the *Old Testament*, that if they did put away the Evil of their Doings, if they did cease to do evil, and learn to do

¹ Heb. x. 31.^m Heb. vii. 25.

concerning BAPTISM. 17

well; though their Sins were as Scarlet, they should be white as Snow; though they were red like Crimson, they should be as Woollⁿ? Surely then we, under the New Testament, wherein the Mercy of God is more fully revealed, cannot be less certain, that the most heinous Sins, repented of, shall be forgiven. Accordingly St. John teacheth, *The Blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all Sin*: and, *if we confess our Sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our Sins, and to cleanse us from ALL Unrighteousness*. And the Saviour himself: *All Manner of Sin and Blasphemy shall be forgiven unto Men^p*; excepting the Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. Concerning which, without entering into a Discussion of its precise Nature, I shall only observe; that it is such a Kind of Sin, as no penitent Believer in Christ can be supposed guilty of; and that therefore the Fears which some pious Persons have had, lest they have committed this Sin, are without Foundation.

This now is the happy Condition of him who, in Baptism, hath sincerely de-

ⁿ Isa. i. 16, 17, 18.

• 1 John i. 7, 9.

^p Matt. xii. 31.

voted himself unto *Christ*. The divine Sentence of Condemnation is reversed, and God is become his reconciled Father. And who, that rightly weighs the Worth and Importance of Things, would not earnestly covet to be in such a State? A Mind loaded with Guilt, and apprehensive of the Wrath of a justly incensed *God*, is indeed an insupportable Burden: such a *wounded Spirit, who can bear⁹?* But when the Spirit is set right with *God*, and strengthened with the Hope of divine Acceptance; this will bear a Man up under all the Infirmities of the Body, and Troubles of the World. We conclude therefore; that not the Rich and Great, not they to whom the World speaketh Peace and Honour, are the happy Persons; but they, and only they, to whom belongeth that Promise; *Their Sins and Iniquities will I remember no more^r.*

II. Another great *Privilege* belonging unto the Christian Profession, which we enter into by Baptism, is, the Assistance and Conduct of God's Grace and Spirit. Accordingly we are *bap-*

⁹ Prov. xviii. 14.

^r Heb. x. 17.

concerning BAPTISM. 19

tized in the Name of the *Holy Ghost*, into the Faith of him as the *Sanctifier*: And, saith Christ, *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, [Paraclete, or Advocate] that he may abide with you FOR EVER, even the Spirit of Truth*^r. I will not enter into the Disputes, which have arisen concerning the Nature and Manner of the Spirit's operating on the Minds of Men. Only let it be observed, since divine Help is promised, " We have no Reason to doubt of the Reality of the Promise, because we are ignorant of the Manner how the holy Spirit worketh upon the Minds of Men so unperceptibly, as that his Motions can only be known by the Effects of them, viz. our good Purposes and Practices. This ought to be no Prejudice against the Belief of the Holy Spirit's assisting good Men in a Course of Religion and Virtue. For though one Man cannot persuade another Man, or convey his own Thoughts into another's Mind, but by making way by his Senses ; yet the holy Spi-

^r John xvi. 16, 17.

^s Dr. Claggett's *Serm.* Vol. II. p. 79.

“*rit* can inform and persuade us by
 “ immediate Impressions upon our
 “ Minds, without making Use of our
 “ Senses, or any Thing else that be-
 “ longs to our bodily Frame.”

Now in order to give some Representation of this blessed Privilege, I will briefly take Notice of two or three Particulars, as to the Purposes for which God giveth the holy Spirit.

I. As the Spirit of *Truth* and *Wisdom*. *When the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth*†. Which Words, 'tis granted, refer directly unto those extraordinary Illuminations necessary for the *Apostles*, as the first and authentic Publishers of the Gospel of *Christ*: but as this holy Spirit is to *abide* with the Disciples *for ever*, we may therefore conclude he performeth this Office unto the Disciples of all Ages, according as their Circumstances require it. As for those who are of a meek and teachable Disposition, willing to understand the Truth, and praying sincerely for divine Instruction, the *Father of Lights* will guide them in Judgment, and teach them his Way: they

† John xvi. 13.

shall not fail of that Truth which is necessary unto their Salvation. Accordingly our *Saviour* teacheth, that God is very ready to give the holy Spirit to them that ask him. *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good Gifts unto your Children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him^u.* And the Apostle James: *If any of you lack Wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all Men liberally^w, &c.* And in this a Christian may rejoice, as his great Happiness and Security: that whereas the indiscreetly zealous, of all Parties, are too apt to appropriate saving Truth to themselves, and to censure those who are contrary minded as in dangerous Error; *if any Man be a Lover of Truth, and will do the Will of God, he shall know so much of the Doctrines of God, as is necessary for him to know; God will not suffer him to abide in any fatal Error.*

2. God giveth his Spirit to carry on the Work of *Sanctification* in the Heart of a true Christian. *It is through the Spirit, that we mortify the Deeds of the Body^x.*

^u Luke xi. 13.
viii. 13.

^w James i. 5.

^x Rom.

And as *this is the Will of God*, even our *Sanctification*^y, so he is ever ready to further and prosper us in the Prosecution of this good Work. So that a good Man may rejoice, in humble Confidence of *this very Thing*; that he which hath begun a good Work in him, will perform it until the Day of Jesus Christ^z.

It were indeed a gross Mistake, if any Christian should imagine there is no Need to exert his own Endeavours, and that the Spirit of God does all in the Work of Sanctification. This is contrary to those Passages, where we are exhorted to *give Diligence, to add to our Faith Vertue, and to Vertue Knowledge, and to Knowledge Temperance, &c. to give Diligence to make our Calling and Election sure*^a; and to many other Places of Scripture. But we are encouraged unto a cheerful Application in working out our own Salvation; and to *cleanse our selves from all Filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God*^b; in that it is God which *worketh in us both to will and to do of his good Pleasure*^c. So that, notwith-

^y 1 Theff. iv. 3. ^z Phil. i. 6.
ⁱ 5, 6, 7, 10. ^b 2 Cor. vii. 1.
ⁱⁱ 12, 13.

^a 2 Pet.
^c Phil.

standing the Strength of inward Corruptions, or outward Temptations, while we are careful to maintain our Christian Character, we may rest in this Hope, That God will confirm us unto the End, that we may be Blameless in the Day of our Lord Jesus Christ^d. Let me just mention

3. God giveth the holy Spirit as the Spirit of Comfort. He is *that other Comforter, which abideth with the Church for ever*. Accordingly we find, that Joy and Peace are said to be *the Fruit of the Spirit*^e. And St. Paul prays thus for the Romans: *Now the God of Hope fill you with all Joy and Peace in believing, that ye may abound in Hope, through the Power of the Holy Ghost*^f. But I proceed to a

III^d Privilege. By Baptism we are initiated into the Communion of Saints; or into the Christian Church. *Then they that gladly received his Word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand Souls: and they continued stedfast in the Apostles*

^d 1 Cor. i. 8.
xv. 13.

^e Gal. v. 22.

^f Rom.

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Doctrine and Fellowship, (or Communion) and in breaking of Bread, and in Prayers.

The Communion of Saints, St. Paul thus expresses in his Epistle to the *Ephe- sians*. *Now therefore ye are no more Strangers and Foreigners, but Fellow-Citizens with the Saints, and of the Household of God*^g. Is it accounted an Honour and Privilege to be free of an opulent and flourishing City, or to be a Member, a Child, of a noble and princely Family? Much greater is the Honour and Advantage to be free of *that City which hath Foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God*^h; and to be an *Heir of God through Christ*ⁱ. In your unrenewed State, and while you were disobedient to the Gospel, it may be said, that *at that Time ye were without Christ, being Aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, and Strangers from the Covenants of Promise, having no Hope, and without God in the World: but now, if ye are in Christ Jesus, by a living Faith, a Faith that purifies the Heart, ye, who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the Blood of Christ*^k. As Mem-

^g Eph. ii. 19.
iv. 7.

^h Heb. xi. 10.
^k Eph. ii. 12, 13.

ⁱ Gal.

bers of the Christian Church, we are privileged with an Ordinance, that betokens our belonging to the Body, whereof *Christ* is Head, and which he will render most glorious, at his second Coming, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all Things under himself¹. I conclude this Head with that magnificent Representation, given by the Author to the *Hebrews*, of their Privilege and Honour who belong to the Christian Church. *Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable Company of Angels, to the general Assembly and Church of the First-born which are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the Spirits of just Men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant, and to the Blood of Sprinkling, that speaketh better Things than the Blood of Abel^m.*

IV. They who duly receive *Baptism* are entitled to the *Resurrection of the Just*. “ And this (as Dr. Clarke on Baptism observes) “ was most signifi-

¹ Phil. iii. 21.

^m Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24.

“cantly represented by their descend-
 “ing into the Water, and rising out of
 “it again. For as Christ descended
 “into the Earth, and was *raised again*
 “*from the Dead by the Glory of the*
 “*Father*; so the Persons baptized were
 “*buried with him by Baptism into*
 “*Death*, and rose again after the Simi-
 “litude of his Resurrection. They
 “were *planted together in the Likeness*
 “*of his Death*; and they were by this
 “Sign assured, that *they should be also*
 “*in the Likeness of his Resurrection.*”
 Indeed all, both good and bad, shall be
 raised from the Dead; but there will be
 a prodigious Difference in their State
 and Condition. *The Hour is coming in*
the which all that are in the Graves,
shall hear his Voice, and shall come forth;
they that have done good unto the Resur-
rection of Life, and they that have done
evil unto the Resurrection of Damna-
*tion*ⁿ. It were eligible unto the Wic-
 ked, to abide in everlasting Darkness
 and Death, and never to rise at all:
 for their Resurrection shall be *unto*
Shame and everlasting Contempt; and
 glad would they be to have *the Rocks*

ⁿ John v. 28, 29.

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and Mountains fall on them, if by any Means they might be *hid from the Face* of their righteous Judge°. But unto good Christians, the Resurrection is the Time of complete Redemption. As soon indeed as they are *absent from the Body* they are *present with the Lord*†: but their full Glory and Happiness shall not be until Christ's second and glorious Appearance; *when he shall come to be glorified in his Saints, and to be admired in all them that believe*¶. Now, whereas *this is the Father's Will, that of all which he hath given unto the Son, he should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last Day*; and that every one which *seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting Life, and be raised up by Christ at the last Day*†: let us employ a few Thoughts on this inestimable Privilege, viz. the Resurrection of Life eternal.

Concerning the Resurrection of the Just, St. Paul speaks thus. *It is sown in Corruption, it is raised in Incorruption: it is sown in Dishonour, it is raised in Glory: it is sown in Weakness, it is raised in*

° Rev. vi. 15, 16, 17.

¶ 2 Thess. i. 10.

† 2 Cor. v. 8.

† John vi. 39, 40.

Power : it is sown a natural Body, it is raised a spiritual Body^s. It is sown in Corruption. We have now frail Bodies, that are always tending to a Dissolution. We carry the seeds and Principles of Death within us, and are exposed to a Variety of Diseases and Accidents, which reduce the Body to Dust and Putrefaction : but the Just, at their Resurrection, shall receive a Body which hath no tendency unto a Dissolution. The Fear of Death, which is such a Burden and Clog upon the Minds of many good Persons, shall be over for ever : Neither can they die any more ; for they are equal unto the Angels, and are the Children of God, being the Children of the Resurrection^t. It is sown in Dishonour. It is subject to various Deformities ; a vile Body, and will soon become a loathsome Carcass, subject to Rottenness, and the Food of Worms. But when the Saviour comes from Heaven, he shall change our vile Body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious Body^u. Some have consider'd the Splendor of Christ's Body at the Transfiguration, as

^s 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43, 44.

^t Luke xx. 36.

^u Phil. iii. 21.

a Specimen of the Glory to be bestow'd on the raised Bodies of the Saints. At this Transfiguration, it is said of Christ, *His Face did shine as the Sun, and his Raiment was white as the Light*^w. And Christ himself, speaking of the End of the World, says; *Then shall the Righteous shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father*^x. After all, it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is^y. In the mean Time, how should this so blessed a Hope quicken us to purify our selves, even as he is pure! It is sown in *Weakness*. The Body, as it now is, groans and struggles under abundance of Infirmities and Pains; which, to many, render Life a Burden. But it shall be raised in *Power*; it shall be invested with never failing Health, and immortal Vigour; always fit, and fully adapted for the Employments and Offices to which it shall be called. Once more: *It is sown a natural* (animal) *Body*; *it is raised a spiritual Body*. Our present animal Nature is, on many Ac-

^w Matt. xvii. 2.

^x Chap. xiii. 43.

^y 1 John iii. 2, 3.

counts, a Disadvantage, by reason of those Members and Organs which are so liable to Weariness and Disorder; and by reason of those strong Appetites and Affections which ensnare and seduce the Soul. There is *a Law in these gross Members, which wars against the Law of the Mind*^z, and too often captivates and overcomes it. How much Cause then has the Christian to rejoice in Hope of that Day, *when this corruptible shall be changed for Incorruption, and this Mortal for Immortality!* Then shall the Body be so exalted and refined, as to be free from all disorderly Passions and Appetites, and a fit Instrument and Partner of the perfected Mind, in its heavenly Services and Enjoyments. Then shall those Words be accomplished: *They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the Sun light upon them, nor any Heat: for the Lamb which is in the midst of the Throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living Fountains of Waters; and God shall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes*^a. Such Honour and Blessedness have the Saints!

^z Rom. vii. 23.

^a Rev. vii. 16, 17.

Who therefore, that rightly understands and regards his own Happiness, must not be forward and glad to embrace the Christian Profession, and zealous to live agreeably to it, in *having his Fruit unto Holiness*; since *the End* of such Profession and Practice is *everlasting Life*? What is there in the Service of Sin, or of this World, to be compared with the Blessings which the Gospel promiseth unto them that obey it? Who is a wise Man, but he who *seeketh principally the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness*? The Advantages of this World are very insufficient for our Happiness, while we have them: they are interrupted and mix'd with many Sorrows and Disappointments: and how much soever they have our Hearts, we must, e'er long, be parted from them for ever. But he, who makes Religion his Choice and Business, hath a Fountain of Pleasure, which the Vicissitudes of the World cannot rob him of; and is entitled unto an *Inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away*.

C H A P. II.

Of the QUALIFICATIONS or PREPARATIONS requisite to the worthy receiving of Baptism.

AS Baptism becomes unto us a Part of divine Service, only by Virtue of its being commanded in the *New Testament*; we must therefore have Recourse to the *New Testament* for Information as to the right *Manner* of performing this Duty, and likewise as to the *Qualifications* necessary in him who receives it.

Now the *New Testament* evidently requires these *two* Things of him who comes to Baptism: *viz. Repentance towards God, and Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.* Of each distinctly.

I. He who would receive Baptism in an acceptable Manner must have *repented of his former Sins.* Accordingly, when the *Jews* were pricked in their
Heart

Heart at *Peter's* preaching, and ask'd, *What shall we do?* *Peter* answer'd, *Repent and be baptized^b*. And *St. Paul* considers Christians as being by their Baptism professedly *dead to Sin*, free from its Dominion and Service. Their being covered with Water, and, as it were, buried in it, represents their Death to Sin. *We are buried with him by Baptism into Death, that — we should walk in Newness of Life^c*. And this is what the *Church Catechism* rightly teacheth. For, in Answer to the Question, *What is required of Persons to be baptized?* It says; *Repentance, whereby they forsake Sin; and Faith, whereby they stedfastly believe the Promises of God, made to them in that Sacrament^d*.

Whoever therefore is willing to become obedient to Christ, in receiving his Institution of Baptism, must take Care that he receive it with a Heart truly sorry for his past Sins, and fully resol-

^b Acts ii. 38.

^c Rom. vi. 4.

^d As for the next Question, *Why then are Infants baptized, when, by reason of their tender Age, they cannot perform them?* All the Answer is; *Because they promise them both by their Sureties; which Promise, when they come to Age, themselves are bound to perform.*

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ved to renounce every evil Way. It is a great Matter to *begin* well, and to have the Foundation laid solid. Therefore the Candidate for Baptism should search and examine his Disposition and Ways, with all Diligence and Impartiality. He must look well to it that there be no *accursed Thing* harbour'd and cherish'd; no Lust indulg'd, which, like an Error in the Foundation, would endanger the Fall and Ruin of the whole Superstructure. And with all his own Care, to have the Foundation laid firm in a sincere Repentance and turn of Mind, from Sin to Righteousness; he should, with great Sincerity and Frequency, be offering up to God such a Prayer as that of the *Psalmist*: *Search me, O God, and know my Heart; try me, and know my Thoughts; and see if there be any wicked Way in me, and lead me in the Way everlasting* ^e. *Let my Heart be sound in thy Statutes* ^f. He should be ready to say:

“ Let me take this holy Covenant upon
 “ me, with full Purpose to cleave unto
 “ the Lord. Let me have a sincere Ab-
 “ horrence of every false Way, and
 “ heartily renounce every Interest and
 “ Gratification, which is contrary to the

^e Psal. cxxxix. 23, 24.

^f Psal. cxix. 80.

“ In-

“ Interest of Christ, and my Allegiance
 “ unto him. I would lay aside every
 “ Weight, and the Sin that doth so easily
 “ beset me, in order to run, with Pati-
 “ ence and Success, that most important
 “ and advantageous Race set before me.
 “ *Every Man that striveth for the Ma-*
 “ *stery, is temperate in all Things*^g; takes
 “ Care to govern and manage his Body
 “ in such Manner, that he may run with
 “ Success, and win the Prize: *Now they*
 “ *do it to obtain a corruptible Crown*^h,
 “ fading Leaves of Bays or Laurel, &c.
 “ but I have an *incorruptible* one set be-
 “ fore me, to encourage my Diligence
 “ and Faithfulness in running the *Chri-*
 “ *stian* Race. Let me therefore enter up-
 “ on it with vigorous Resolutions, full
 “ Bent of Mind, *so to run, that I may*
 “ *obtain*. I would keep my Eye on this
 “ immortal *Crown*, as my grand Interest
 “ and *Mark*, making all other Interests
 “ bow and give Place to it. Lord help
 “ me by thy Grace!”

This is Language suitable to a sin-
 cere Penitent and Convert to God;
 whose Mind is enlighten'd to a just Sense
 of the Evil and Danger of Sin, and
 who understands that his great Interest

^g 1 Cor. ix. 25.

^h Ibid.

lies in a hearty Love to God, and Attachment to true Religion.

And here it will be very proper, that the Candidate for Baptism take Time seriously to consider and recollect, what have been his *particular* Transgressions, and most *remarkable* Ways of offending God. Let him not spare to represent to his Mind all the Aggravations, where-with his Offences have been attended. *For Instance* : If they have been long practised ; if they have been against clear Light and Conviction ; against many Warnings and pressing Invitations to a better Life ; and that they imply base Ingratitude to a good God, to whom we are under the highest Obligations, and whose Commands are all reasonable, and designed for our Happiness.

Some may have a Course of open Wickedness, and enormous Crimes to repent of ; such as Drunkenness, Uncleaness, Profaneness, Injustice and Falshood. And others, when they come to know themselves, and consider their Conduct, will find much Evil to be humbled for, though they may have given the World no occasion to mark them as immoral and licentious. Perhaps they have room to charge themselves

selves with habitual Neglect of God; with predominant Pride, or earthly-mindedness, so that they have pursued nothing higher than the Interests of the Body, and this present Life, and been guilty of a settled Neglect to approve themselves to God as their chief Business, and to seek after Heaven as their principal Happiness. In a Word: it is the Duty and Interest of every one, who designs to receive holy Baptism, to condemn himself heartily for his past Evils, to enquire into the Corruptions of his Heart and Life, that he may be ashamed and humbled for them before God: and the greater his Transgressions have been, the deeper, in all Reason, should be his Humiliation. Above all, it must be carefully remember'd, that the *Essence* of Repentance lies in *Amendment*; and therefore, he must resolve to have *no Fellowship with the unfruitful Works of Darknes*.

Nothing which has been here said is a just Discouragement to any sincere Person, to *come and join himself to the Lord* in the Covenant of Baptism; but only tends to show it should not be done *inconsiderately*; that there must be a well-laid Foundation, in a sincere forsaking of Sin, and Purpose of being a Servant of

Righteousness for Time to come. And surely it is meet to be said unto God, — I will not offend any more ; that which I see not, teach thou me ; and if I have done Iniquity, I will do no more ⁱ.

II. *Faith* in our Lord Jesus Christ is a necessary Qualification for Christian Baptism. See here is Water, said the Eunuch to Philip ; what doth hinder me to be baptized ? And Philip said ; If thou believest with all thine Heart, thou mayst. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the Chariot to stand still : and they went down both into the Water, both Philip and the Eunuch ; and he baptized him^k. Now he, that would be
bap-

ⁱ Job xxxiv. 31, 32.

^k Acts viii. 36, 37, 38. I beg Leave here to enquire ; whether, whatever Faith is sufficient to denominate a Man a *Christian Believer*, be not also sufficient to give him a Right to *Christian Baptism*, if he desire it ? and consequently, whether it be not improper, and a Diminution of our Christian Liberty, to make an Assent to any such Doctrines and Opinions, a necessary Condition of *Baptism*, as may be believed or disbelieved, without forfeiting our Character as *Believers in Christ* ? Should it be objected by Christians, for Instance, of the *Calvinist Faith* ; “ our Church is founded on the Principles

baptized into the Faith of Christ, should consider and receive him in his three-fold Office, of *Prophet*, *Priest* and *King*. Let us employ a few Thoughts on each.

1. Christ must be received by the Person to be baptized, as the great *Prophet*

“ ciples of *Calvinism*; and therefore we can admit
 “ none to be baptized into our Communion but
 “ such as declare themselves of *that* Faith:” or
 should Christians of the *Arminian* Faith, urge the
 like on their Part: I ask, whether this would not
 be insufficient; unless it can be shown, that the pe-
 culiar distinguishing Doctrines, of the one Side or
 the other, are *essential to a Christian*? And if,
 on which Side soever a Man believes in these
 Points, he may be a *Christian*; may he not then
 be baptized, which is nothing else but *professing*
himself a Christian? And if the *Gospel* will al-
 low both Sides to receive Christian Baptism; can
 it be thought we shall have any Praise from our
 divine Master, in making the Door to a Profession
 of his Religion streighter than he hath left it?
 Suppose that great Ornament of the Church of
England, the late Archbishop *Tillotson*, “ that has
 “ cultivated the Subjects of *Holiness*, *Peace* and
 “ *Love*, by his *Pen* and his *Practice* ;” as Dr.
Watts speaks of him, in his Discourse on the *Hap-
 piness of separate Spirits*, p. 98. suppose, I say,
 this great and good Man (who, 'tis well known,
 was no Adherent to the distinguishing Doctrines of
Calvin) had become a Convert to adult Baptism;
 could any one forbid *Water*, that such a Man
 should not be baptized?

and Teacher come from God. *For Moses truly said unto the Fathers, a Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your Brethren, like unto me: him shall ye hear, in all Things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every Soul, which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroy'd from among the People*¹. It is a Prophet's Office, to discover the Mind of God, both as to what we are to believe, and what we are to practise. Accordingly Christ says: *To this End was I born, and for this Cause came I into the World, that I should bear Witness unto the Truth*^m. He manifested the Truth to the greatest Advantage; and bore Witness to it, by the Signs and Wonders he wrought himself, and which his Apostles wrought afterwards in his Name, and by his Authority.

Now the great Things he hath propounded to our Faith, are such as these. — That there is one only living and true God, the Creator and Sovereign of the Universe; *who is above all, and in all, and through all*ⁿ. — That God so

¹ Acts iii. 22, 23.

ⁿ Eph. iv. 6.

^m John xviii. 37.

loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son ; that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting Life°.—That therefore, whosoever, repenting of his Sin, believeth in Jesus Christ, so as to be obedient to his holy Gospel, shall be saved.—That the present Life is a State of Trial.—That God is ready to give all needful Assurances of his holy Spirit to such as sincerely ask and improve them.—That there will be a Resurrection of the Dead, and a solemn, impartial Judgment ; so that *all which are in the Graves shall hear his (Christ's) Voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good, unto the Resurrection of Life ; and they that have done evil, unto the Resurrection of Damnation*°. Such as these are the important Articles which the great Prophet hath propounded to our Belief, and which he who comes to Christian Baptism should be well instructed in.

2. There is the *priestly Office* of Christ, which the Candidate for Baptism should also be acquainted with. *Jesus, as our great high Priest, is* ² *passed into the Heavens, to appear in the Presence*

° John iii. 16. P John v. 28, 29.

² Heb. iv. 14. ix. 24.

of God for us, in virtue of his Bloodshed. It was the Will of God, that *without shedding of Blood there should be no Remission*. Therefore *bath Christ appeared, to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself*^a. So then, if the Blood of Bulls, and of Goats, and the Ashes of an Heifer sprinkling the Unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the Flesh; how much more shall the Blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without Spot unto God, purge your Conscience from dead Works, to serve the living God^r? The Candidate for Baptism should then be well apprized of this great and comfortable Truth; that *in him we have Redemption through his Blood, even the Forgiveness of Sins*^s; and that, as St. John speaks, *the Blood of Christ cleanseth us from all Sin*^t.

And, as he died for Sinners, so he ever liveth *to make Intercession for them*. On this the Author to the Hebrews grounds his Ability to save. *Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make Intercession for them*^u. He is our Advocate with the

^a Heb. ix. 22, 26.^r Heb. ix. 13, 14.^s Eph. i. 7.^t 1 John i. 7.^u Heb. vii. 25.

Father,

Father, as well as the Propitiation for our Sins : from whence humble and penitent Souls have Encouragement, to come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, to obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help in Time of Need^u. Since God is in Christ, reconciling the World unto himself, not imputing their Trespases unto them^w; none who come unto God by Christ, shall be cast out. In this Faith let the repenting Sinner come to Baptism; rejoicing that the Lord taketh Pleasure in them that fear him and Hope in his Mercy^x.

3. We must have Faith in Christ as Lord and King. For, to this End Christ both died, and rose, and revived; that he might be LORD both of the Dead and Living^y. In like Manner St. Paul to the Philippians : Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a Name which is above every Name; that at the Name of Jesus every Knee should bow, of Things in Heaven, and Things in the Earth, and Things under the Earth; and that every Tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the Glory of God the Father^z. And

^u Heb. iv. 16. ^w 2 Cor. v. 19. ^x Psal.
cxlvii. 11. ^y Rom. xiv. 9. ^z Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11.

of the regal Power of Christ, the same Apostle speaks in another Epistle thus. *For he must reign till he hath put all Enemies under his Feet. — For he hath put all Enemies under his Feet. But when he saith, all Things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted that did put all Things under him. And when all Things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that did put all Things under him, that God may be all in all^a.* Since therefore the Father hath put all Things under his Feet, and given him to be Head over all Things to the Church^b; the Person to be baptized must consider and receive him as such; resolving to live not without Law, but under Law to Christ; observing all Things whatsoever he hath commanded^c. And as in Baptism he professeth to be obedient unto Christ, it is of the utmost Consequence, that in his after-conduct he fulfil this Engagement; because Christ will come again as Lord and Judge, to call him to Account. *For we must all appear before the Judgment-Seat of Christ,*

^a 1 Cor. xv. 25, 27, 28.

^b Eph. i. 22.

^c Matt. xxviii. 20.

concerning BAPTISM. 45

*that every one may receive the Things
done in his Body, according to that he
hath done, whether it be good or bad^d.
But concerning Obedience, I shall say
more in the next Chapter.*

^d 2 Cor. v. 10.

CHAP.

C H A P. III.

Of the OBLIGATIONS of those who are baptized.

THE general Obligation of those who are baptized is taught us in these Words. *Therefore we are buried with him by Baptism into Death; that like as Christ was raised up from the Dead by the Glory of the Father, so we also should walk in Newness of Life.* But more particularly,

I. They are obliged to have an *universal Regard* unto the *Commandments* of Christ. Accordingly, when our blessed Lord gave the Commission to go teach all Nations and baptize them, he added; *teaching them to observe all Things whatsoever I have commanded you*^f. And he hath laid it down as the Test, or Proof of our being his Friends, *that we*

^e Rom. vi. 4.

^f Matt. xxviii. 20.

concerning BAPTISM. 47

do whatsoever he commands^g. By saying we must have an *universal* Regard to the Commandments of Christ, it is not supposed we can live perfectly free from Sin: For if we say we have no Sin, we deceive our selves, and the Truth is not in us^h. But the Meaning is, there is no one Command that we must refuse to comply with, or knowingly and presumptuously transgress. We must esteem all his Precepts concerning all Things to be right, and hate every false Wayⁱ. And wherein we find our selves transgress, we must be sorry for it, and endeavour to amend. Then shall we not be ashamed, when we thus have Respect unto all God's Commandments^k: when, whatsoever Things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good Report, if there be any Virtue, and if there be any Praise, we think on these Things^l. But he who lives habitually and presumptuously in any one Sin, is guilty of a *fundamental* Failure in his Christian Character, and cannot be accounted a faithful Disciple of Christ. Whosoever shall keep the whole Law,

^g John xv. 14.
cxix. 128.

^h 1 John i. 8.
^k Psal cxix. 6.

ⁱ Psal.
^l Phil. iv. 8.

and

and yet [thus] offend in one Point, he is guilty of all^m. He violates the Authority on which the Whole is built; and would offend in any other Point, if he had equal Temptation.

II. He, who is enter'd into the Christian Profession by Baptism, must endeavour to grow in Grace, and improve in the several Virtues of the spiritual Life. *Let us go on unto Perfectionⁿ. Forgetting those Things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those Things which are before, we must press toward the Mark, for the Prize of the high Calling of God in Christ Jesus^o.*

He who is only concern'd for just such a Measure of Goodness, as may suffice to bring him to Heaven, is in great Danger to come short of the Kingdom. On the contrary, it is the Character of the just or good Man, that *his Path is as the shining Light, shining more and more unto the perfect Day^p*. We must be careful to answer this Character.

And let us observe, that for vigorous Endeavours after it, we have the greatest Encouragement, and the most

^m James ii. 10.
iii. 13, 14.

ⁿ Heb. vi. 1.

^p Prov. iv. 18.

^o Phil.

quickenings Motives. Consider only these two.

1. *God is ready to aid and prosper our Attempts of this Sort. Whosoever bath (and improves it) to him shall be given, and he shall have more Abundance⁹. And this is the Encouragement Christians have, to work out their own Salvation with fear and trembling; that it is God which worketh in them both to will and to do, of his good Pleasure¹. The God of Holiness is a well-pleased Observer of the sincere Diligence and Care a Christian useth, to mortify the Deeds of the Body; to regulate and purify his Affections; to root out Pride, and cultivate Humility; to divest himself of Envy, and base Selfishness, and put on Bowels of Mercy and Kindness; to purge himself from Sensuality, and direct the Mind to the Love and Imitation of God, as the true Felicity of a reasonable Creature: God, I say, is a well pleased Observer of the Christian's Diligence in such Things, and will not fail to prosper it. As for such who are thus spiritually diligent, the Blessing of the Lord will make them rich. Every Branch*

⁹ Matt. xiii. 12.

¹ Phil. ii. 12, 13.

that beareth Fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more Fruit^s. The Advantage of this Growth in Grace (besides the growing Pleasure accompanying it in this World) is,

2. That in Proportion to such Improvement, shall be the Measure of our future and eternal Happiness. *As one Star differeth from another Star in Glory, so also is the Resurrection of the Dead^t. He that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully^u. The same Doctrine is taught by one having Rule over ten Cities; another over five; and by one having a Prophet's Reward; another a righteous Man's Reward. Since therefore we know our Labour is not in vain, but every Improvement in Virtue and true Goodness shall add to our heavenly Treasure; since we shall reap the eternal Benefit of Industry in Religion for this short Time; this is great Encouragement to be stedfast, unmoveable, and always abounding in the Work of the Lord^w.*

Now, if we are desirous to grow in Grace, we must diligently use the Means

^s John xv. 2.

^u 2 Cor. ix. 6.

^t 1 Cor. xv. 41, 42.

^w 1 Cor. xv. 58.

which,

which, in the Nature of the Thing, are necessary, and which *God* hath appointed for this Purpose. Such are these following.

Watchfulness and Self-examination.

This is like a Tradesman's keeping his Accounts in good Order: he knows then on what Foundation he stands; and can make an easy judgment, whether he goes forward or backward. But if he does not look into his Affairs, nor keep regular Accounts, all is in Confusion and Uncertainty.

A Christian Professor then should often recollect himself, and compare his Temper and Conduct with the Nature and Will of *God*. By thus observing and inquiring into our ways, we shall come to understand our defects, and know better how to set our guard against them. Through Neglect of this, People continue in many Follies and Evils unthought of; and, in the End, cause much Perplexity, and many melancholy Fears to themselves, as well as set forth Religion to others in a disadvantageous Light: whereas it should be the Study of *Christ's* Disciples, not only to have the Reality of Religion in themselves, and save their own Souls; but

moreover, to have *their Light shine before men, that they may see their good Works, and glorify their Father who is in Heaven* ^x. But concerning Self-examination, something farther will be said in the last Chapter.

Again; *reading the Word of God, and Prayer*, are excellent Means of Growth in Grace. Constancy and Seriousness in this Work is the Way to *set the Lord always before us*: and a serious lively Sense of *his* Presence is a most powerful Preservative against Temptation, and Incentive to Diligence in well doing. *Hagar* called the Name of the Lord that spake unto her, *Thou God seeest me*^y. And were this deeply fix'd in our Minds, *Thou God seeest me*, it would make us good *Christians*, and good in every Relation of Life. Who would dare to do amiss under the Eye of his Lord and Judge? Who would not be zealous in Works of Duty and Obedience, in the Presence of his Sovereign; who promiseth ample Rewards to the Obedient; and will punish *the slothful and wicked Servant*? If then we maintain a serious Sense of our being always

^x Matt. v. 16,

^y Gen. xvi. 13.

in the Presence of *God*, who is essentially every where, we shall not want a Motive to be diligent in well doing: which Sense of the divine Being, is greatly promoted by *reading* his Word, and by *Prayer*. Besides, since we cannot prosper in Holiness without heavenly Aid; for this Cause we must not cease to offer up our Supplications, that God would help us *to grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*. And as for studying his Word, we thereby become acquainted with his Will, and learn to correct and regulate our Conduct. *Thou, through thy Commandments, hast made me wiser than mine Enemies; for they are ever with me. Through thy Precepts I get Understanding; therefore I hate every false Way. Thy Word is a Lamp unto my Feet, and a Light unto my Path*^a.

Once more; As an excellent Means of spiritual Improvement, let me recommend a careful Attendance on public Worship and Improvement of the Lord's Day. *Those that be planted in the House of the Lord, shall flourish in the Courts of our God*^a. In the House of God we

^a Psal. cxix. 98, 104, 105.

^a Psal. xcii. 13.

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have rich Cultivations, excellent Means of profiting; and if we are careful and serious in our Attendance on those Helps, we may depend on the divine Blessing and Concurrence, that, in the Prophet's Language, *as the Rain cometh down from Heaven, and returneth not thither; but watereth the Earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud^b*: so the Word of God, and the Services of his House, *shall not return void, but prosper in the Thing whereto they are sent.*

Let us then treat the *Lord's Day*, not as a Time for Sloth and Idleness, and Diversions; but as a special Day of *Labour* for our spiritual Profit, in the Exercise of Reading, and Meditation, and Prayer, and good Discourse in *our own Houses*; and in worshipping God in Spirit and Truth, and receiving his Word with Attention and Love, while in *his House*: not lightly *forsaking the assembling our selves together, as the Manner of some is^c.*

And as we should not forsake the assembling our selves together, so, if we mean to please God, or profit our selves by the Services of the *Sanctuary*, we

^b Isa. lv. 10, 11.

^c Heb. x. 25.

must guard against the common Fault of Negligence and Drouziness. What *Solomon* observes is true, as well in Religion as common Life. *The Soul of the Sluggard desireth and hath nothing; but the Soul of the Diligent shall be made fat^d.*

III. He, who is *baptized* into *Jesus Christ*, must consider himself obliged to maintain a weaned Temper from the World, and live above it. In the first and chief Place, he must not conform to the World in any of its vicious Customs and Practices. Whosoever will be a Friend of the World, in such Manner, is the Enemy of God^e. It is a Part of Christian Fortitude absolutely necessary, to dare to be singular in any, every Point, where a good Conscience requires it.

But, besides a Non-conformity to the World in Things evidently *sinful*, and contrary to Virtue, Christians must beware of an *earthly Temper*. They must take Heed that they do not overmuch affect and delight in, and care for this World; of which there is no small Danger. They profess to have *their*

^d Prov. xiii. 4.

^e James iv. 4.

Conversation (Citizenship) in Heaven ; to be Pilgrims and Strangers in the Earth ; to seek and desire a better Country, i. e. an heavenly. Therefore, with respect to the present World, they should rejoice in its Comforts, as though they rejoiced not ; they should weep under its Sorrows and Afflictions, as though they wept not ; they should buy as though they possessed not, and use this World without abusing it ; for the Fashion of this World passeth away^f. Such, in good Measure, will be a Christian's Temper, if that Faith be in him, firm and vigorous, which is the Substance of Things hoped for, and the Evidence of Things not seen^g.

Christians are required to mortify their Affection to the World in these three Things: the Lust of *Ambition, sensual Pleasure and Riches* ; which St. John is understood to intend in those Words: *All that is in the World, the Lust of the Flesh, and the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life, is not of the Father, but is of the World^h.*

^f 1 Cor. vii. 30, 31.

^h 1 John ii. 16.

^g Heb. xi. 1.

1. As for *Ambition*; a Christian should aim higher than *the Honour that comes from Men*: he should ever seek principally *the Honour that comes from God*; and prefer the Approbation and Peace of his own Conscience to the Applause and Esteem of the whole World; nay, esteem even that *Reproach* honourable, which falls on him for the Sake of *Christ* his Master, and a steady Adherence to his Laws: like *Moses*, who *esteemed the Reproach of Christ greater Riches than the Treasures in Egypt*ⁱ: or, like the *Apostles*, who *departed from the Presence of the Council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer Shame for the Name of Jesus*^k.

2. A Christian must so live above the World, as to stand free of all criminal Indulgences to the *Flesh*. He must principally relish and pursue something above the Pleasures of Sense; and therefore *keep under the Body, and have it in subjection to the Rules of Temperance and Chastity*. *Fleshly Lusts war against the Soul*^l: therefore, whosoever professeth to make the Salvation of his Soul

ⁱ Heb. xi. 26.

^k Acts vi. 41.

^l 1 Pet. ii. 11.

his main Concern, (as in reason every one should) must *crucify the Flesh with the Affections and Lusts*; and take Heed, lest, while he professeth himself *spiritual*, he be found in the End, *carnally minded, which is Death* ^m.

Finally; The baptized Christian must so live above the World, as to be principally careful *not to lay up for himself Treasures on Earth, but in Heaven*. Industry in secular Business is commendable, and a Duty: and, doubtless 'tis very lawful to have in View Gain, as a Reward of Diligence. But what Christianity obligeth us to (wherewith every Man's true Reason must agree) is, that we do not affect earthly Riches as our *Portion*; but always desire and pursue them, consistently with a *superior Desire*, and *principal Care to grow rich towards God, and to lay up Treasure in Heaven*. Let us fear, lest *the Cares of this Life* render us *careless* about the Life to come.

Worldly *Pleasures*, and worldly *Cares*, have each been the Ruin of many Souls. The Impressions of Religion on People entangled and captivated with these, our

^m Rom. viii. 6.

Saviour compares to Seed fallen among Thorns. *That which fell among Thorns, are they which, when they have heard, go forth and are choaked with Cares and Riches, and Pleasures of this Life, and bring no Fruit to Perfectionⁿ.*

Many, through love of the World, have made Shipwreck of Faith, and put away a good Conscience^o. They will be rich; and so fall into Temptation and a Snare, and into many foolish and hurtful Lusts, which drown Men in Destruction and Perdition^p. Who so therefore would act agreeably to his Christian Character, must never, by any Means, so pursue this World's Gain, as is inconsistent with Integrity and a pure Conscience. The plain Christian Rule, which every Disciple of Christ must walk by, in all his Transactions with Men, is what the Lord himself has laid down: *All Things whatsoever ye would that Men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them^q*. A very extensive Rule, and very plain and level to every Capacity.

ⁿ Luke viii. 14.

^p 1 Tim. vi. 9.

^o 1 Tim. i. 19.

^q Matt. vii. 12.

IV. He who is *baptized* into *Jesus Christ* must look on himself particularly concerned to *resist and overcome those Sins of which he is most in Danger*.

Perhaps there is no Man but is prone to some Transgression more than to others; whether by Means of Constitution, or Custom, or Situation and Circumstances in the World. With respect to such Sin, whatever it be, he must be especially on his Guard; and *here* lies the great Trial of his Sincerity and Virtue. He may stand free of some, of many Sins, without proving himself a good Man, because he may have no Inclination or Enticement to them. He may be honest and defraud no one, and yet be a Drunkard: or he may be averse to Intemperance, yet mightily given to oppress and lye, to deceive and over-reach. He may be no profane Swearer, yet guilty of an habitual Neglect of *God*. He may be no Prodigal, wasting his Goods in riotous Living, yet full of Malice and Envy, the very Spirit of the *Devil*. Therefore, what a Christian Professor is concerned to enquire is, whether there be *any one* Transgression that he harbours and practises? Let him consider

der what Evil it is, which, by Temper or Circumstances, he is most addicted to. Does he yield to that? or sincerely watch and pray against it? Here lies the *turning Point*. And Christians should take Heed, lest, though they are *not far from the Kingdom of God*, yet, by Means of some *one* predominant Lust, and indulged Sin, they should finally come short. *All these* (said the young Man in the Gospel) *have I kept from my Youth up: what lack I yet?* Why yet there was one Thing, *an undue Love of this World*, that hinder'd his entring into the Kingdom of God.

V. They, who have been baptized in Christ, must *persevere and endure to the End*.

I have no Design to meddle with the *Controversy* relating to Perseverance. It is sufficient to my Purpose to observe, that the *Scripture* often makes this the Subject of an Exhortation. *Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall*¹. *Beware lest ye also, being led away with the Error of the Wicked, fall from your own Stedfastness*². Now the Just

¹ Matt. xix. 20.

² 1 Cor. x. 12.

³ 2 Pet. iii. 17.

shall live by Faith ; but if he draw back, (so it should be render'd, as any one may see who can consult the Original) my Soul shall have no Pleasure in him^u. And in Ezekiel. But when the Righteous turneth away from his Righteousness, and committeth Iniquity, and doth according to all the Abominations that the wicked Man doth ; shall he live ? All his Righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned. In his Trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his Sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die^w.

And, to prompt our Care to persevere, the Promises are made to such as endure to the End, and overcome. *He that endureth to the End, shall be saved^x. Be thou faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life^y.*

Even to the End of Life, we are in a State of Combat, and our spiritual Enemies will be constantly making War upon us. Them we must resist stedfast in the Faith, lest they rob us of our Crown. And the Disciples of Jesus have this Comfort, under the Temptations they are liable to ; that God is faithful, who will not suffer them to be

^u Heb. x. 38.

^w Ezek. xviii. 24.

^x Matt. x. 22.

^y Rev. ii. 10.

tempted above that they are able; but will, with the Temptation also, make a Way to escape, that they may be able to bear it^z. He will strengthen them with Might by his Spirit in the inner Man^a.

But let them remember also, that *the Spirit may be quenched^b*: and God may be provoked to withdraw his gracious Influences, if they are not improved.

In a Word, there is no other just Ground to conclude, that we shall stand at the last Day in the Number of the *Elect*, than from our present Sanctification and Holiness. And considering how many have made a promising Beginning, and yet *fallen from their Steadfastness*, and (as far as Practice can make manifest) become Slaves of the World and Sin; others have great Cause to be on their Guard, lest they also be led away, and *hardened through the Deceitfulness of Sin*.

^z 1 Cor. x. 13.

^a Eph. iii. 16.

^b 1 Theff. v. 19.

C H A P. IV.

*A PERSUASIVE or EXHORTATION
to Baptism.*

THE present Chapter is intended for the Service of those, who esteem Believer's Baptism an Ordinance of the Gospel, but have not yet received it. Let me offer a serious Persuasion to such, to *practise* according to their *Faith*. And may the good Spirit of God prosper this Address ! Consider then,

I. *It is a Commaud, an Ordinance of Christ.* It is the Method *He* hath ordained, whereby you are to acknowledge your receiving him as your *Saviour* and your *Lord*. And since it is the Appointment of our divine Master, this alone were sufficient to oblige you to its Observance. But he hath moreover told you the *End* and *Design*, for which Baptism is to be observed. It is a *Sign* of the Remission of Sins, on *God's* Part ; and, on *your* Part,

Part, a *Sign* of your Disposition, and purpose to die unto Sin, and live unto Righteousness. Will it be said, you may die unto Sin, and live in the Practice of Righteousness, *without this Ceremony*? But you cannot surely imagine this an Excuse, if you allow Baptism to be a standing Ordinance of the Gospel. You know *it becometh us to fulfil all Righteousness*^c; as our Saviour speaks in Reference to this very Case of *Baptism*. And he hath said; *Ye are my Friends if ye do whatsoever I have commanded you*^d. Consider then, how can you prove your selves the Friends of *Christ*, if you live in the Omission of one plain, acknowledged Command of his? How does it appear you are his willing Disciples, if you refuse to avow and declare your selves such, in the Way and Manner he hath ordained? It is not for *us* to chuse, in what Manner we will declare our selves his Followers. It is not for us to refuse, or neglect that way of doing it, which our *Master* hath settled. This is *his* Will, *his* Appointment; and therefore we are bound to observe it. And, permit me

^c Matt. iii. 15.

^d John xv. 14.

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to ask, to what Purpose is all your Zeal, and pleading for this as the right, and the Gospel Method, while you are not careful to observe and practise it? This Ordinance, was never designed to be a Matter of meer Speculation and Dispute: but *if you know the Command, happy are you if you do it^c.*

If, after all, any should think it a Matter of small Moment, and not worth so much pressing; I may apply to them the Story of *Naaman the Syrian*. As *Naaman* had a Leprosy, *Elisha*, the Prophet of the Lord, sends him a Message, to go, and wash himself seven Times in Jordan, and he should be clean. But he approves not the Method, and refuses to obey. *Naaman was wroth, and went away and said; Behold, I thought he will surely come out to me, and stand and call upon the Name of the Lord his God, and strike his Hand upon the Place, and recover the Leper. Are not Abana and Pharphar, Rivers of Damascus, better than all the Waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a Rage. And his Servants came near,*

^c John xiii. 17.

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and spake unto him, and said; *My Father, if the Prophet had bid thee do some great Thing, wouldst thou not have done it? How much rather then, when he saith to thee, wash and be clean^r.*

In like Manner, if *Jesus Christ*, the great *Prophet* of the *Lord*, and *Head* of the *Church*, had bid you do some great Thing, some very difficult and self-denying Service; might it not, in all Reason, be expected you should do it? How much rather then, when he saith, *be washed*, or baptized, in *Token* of being purified from your Sins; in *Token* of their being forgiven, and of your Resolution henceforward to walk in Newness of Life? These are the great and important Things, which Baptism is appointed to signify. Wherefore then do you content and satisfy your selves, in the Neglect of so plain and significant an Institution?

Will you say, you are not *qualified* for it? Allow me to inquire, what you mean by not being qualified for Baptism? Is it your Meaning, that you have not repented of Sin, nor resolved to forsake it? that you cannot find in

^r 2 Kings v. 10, 11, &c.

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your Heart, *to live soberly, righteously, and godly*? If so; then it must be confessed, you are not meet Subjects of Baptism. But need you be told, it would be perfect *Madness* to sit down easy under such an Excuse as this? In this unrenewed State, this Slavery to Sin, you are indeed unfit for Baptism. But then, oh! consider, you are at the same Time, and for the same Reason, unfit also for the Kingdom of Heaven. *The Wrath of God abideth on you*: and if you die in such a Condition (as Life, you know, is very precarious) you shall not escape the *Damnation of Hell*. Now, is it possible for any one to quiet himself with so dreadful an Apology as *this*, for refusing Baptism? What, is it a light Matter, that thou art not a fit Object of the Mercy of God; and of Pardon, and Reconciliation through *Jesus Christ*? Does it not call for thy most *serious Concern*, that thou standest in continual Jeopardy of being for ever excluded the Kingdom of God, and Regions of Happiness; and of being sentenced to everlasting Punishment? If then thou hast any Concern, to *fly from the Wrath to come*, and to *be saved*; the same Methods which are needful for this, will

qua-

qualify thee for Baptism: *viz.* unfeigned Repentance towards God, and such Faith in *Christ* as issues in sincere Obedience.

And let it be observed; that, with respect to Repentance, and turning to God, no Delay must be admitted; because it is for your Life. *Haste, escape for thy Life, lest thou be consumed.*

But having enter'd on the *Objections* which may arise against receiving Baptism, it will not be improper to take this Place for obviating some others.

Farther then: It may be objected, by some People of Conscience, that they *fear* they are not qualified for Baptism: — that many have been baptized, who have proved a Scandal to their holy Profession: — and as for themselves, should they be baptized, and walk unbecoming the *Gospel*, the latter End would be worse than the Beginning.

Ans. It must be acknowledged as a lamentable Truth, that many are baptized, who, by their unchristian, wicked Lives, prove a Disgrace to their Profession. *Many walk,* as the Apostle speaks^s, *of whom I have told you of-*

^s Phil. iii. 18, 19.

ten,

ten, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the Enemies of the Cross of Christ; whose End is Destruction, whose God is their Belly, and whose Glory is in their Shame, who mind earthly Things.

But what if some walk contrary to their Christian Profession? This is no Reason why a Conscientious Person should refuse to be baptized into the Obedience of Christ. Suppose a Prince commands his Subjects to take the Oath of Allegiance. In consequence of this Order, many take it, who yet afterwards break their Oath, and rise up in Rebellion. No one can imagine this a good Reason, why any well-disposed Subject should refuse the Oath, for fear he also should break it. 'Tis fit I should avow my Loyalty to my rightful King: and though ten Thousand prove false, I may, and ought to know the temper of my own Mind, whether I am resolved to behave as a dutiful Subject: and that others turn Rebels, should the rather animate my Resolution and Zeal, to declare and act for my *Liege Lord*.

But farther; Do you really fear you are not qualified for Baptism? and does nothing hinder, but your doubting of
your

your Meetness for it? I have shown before, what are the necessary Qualifications, viz. *Repentance towards God*, and *Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*. Who-soever has these may, and ought to be baptized. Therefore *examine your selves, prove your own selves*^h. Are you in doubt, whether you have repented of Sin; and whether you have such Faith in *Christ* as determines you to obey him? It behoves you, *indeed*, to clear up this Matter; because nothing less than your *Salvation* is concerned in it. If you have not these Qualifications, you shall not *inherit eternal Life*. So that you ought never to be easy, while any reasonable Doubt remains of your Unfitness for *Baptism*; since the same Things which disqualify you for *that*, disqualify you for being *saved*. By all Means then, examine your selves impartially, whether you have seen the Folly and Evil of Sin; whether there be any Iniquity but what you are willing to renounce; whether you are determined (by the Help of God) to walk in all good Conscience, and to *live soberly, righteously and godly*. And if Conscience

^h 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

answer in the *Affirmative*; then I invite and intreat, yea, allow me to say, in *God's Name, I charge you*, to come to Christian Baptism. *Why tarriest thou, arise and be baptized, and wash away thy Sins, calling upon the Name of the Lord*¹. But if upon Search, Conscience should answer in the *Negative*; or leave it dubious, whether you have repented, and are heartily willing to obey the *Gospel*: then you have no Time for Rest; for it most nearly concerns you, to come to a reasonable Conclusion, whether you are in a State of *Salvation* or of *Damnation*.

Again: Are you afraid to be baptized, lest you should not walk worthy of your holy Profession? Let me answer; this very Fear and Concern is a promising *Sign* to the contrary: for such a Disposition will make you *watchful*; and the Life of Religion depends on Watchfulness.

But let me enquire once more, whether, as to some, the real Cause of their Shyness and Refusal, be not that they do not consent to the Circumspection and Holiness of Life, which, in Bap-

¹ Acts xxii. 16.

tism, is solemnly promised? With whomsoever this is the Case, I beg them to observe, that Baptism debars us of none of the *innocent* Liberties, and reasonable Pleasures of Life: and as for all *vicious* Liberties, or *Licentiousness*; as for all such Gratifications and Pursuits, as the Word of God and Conscience condemn; we are indispensably obliged to abstain from *them*, whether baptized or not. And to refuse the Obligation of Baptism, that you may be at Liberty to sin at an easier Rate; is such wilful and presumptuous Wickedness, as must leave you utterly without Excuse.

There is one Objection more, which must not be passed by, as, I believe, it lies in the Heart of a great many: and that is, *our Method of Baptism is unfashionable and despised*. We are ridicul'd for this *strange* Way: the Multitude is against us; or we may incur the Displeasure of Friends and Acquaintance.

To this I need not say much in answer; because it is an Objection which carries on its very Face its own Condemnation. However, a little must be said. Do you then refuse this holy Ordinance because unfashionable and de-

G spised?

spised? Alas! where is the Sincerity of your Regard to the *Lord Jesus*, if you have not that *small* Portion of Courage and Resolution, which is requisite to receive an Institution of his, contrary to the Way of the Generality of your Neighbours? Indeed, no wise Man would be singular for Singularity's sake. But if you cannot bear a little vulgar Reproach, for the Sake of acting agreeably to a good Conscience; how would you have done in those Times, when good Men had the Trial, not only of *cruel Mockings, but of Scourgings, yea, moreover of Bonds and Imprisonment, and the most torturing Deaths*^k? How different is your Spirit from that of the Apostles? *who departed from the Presence of the Council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer Shame for the Name of Jesus*^l!

But through divine Goodness, we live in a Land and Time of Liberty; and may act as our Faith directs, without the Hazard of Persecution. Since then we have this Liberty, we shall be altogether inexcusable if we neglect it. Or, supposing you should incur the Displea-

^k Heb. xi. 36, 37.

^l Acts v. 41.

sure of Friends ; Matters of Conscience and Duty must not give Place to them. Only use proper Care to be persuaded, on good Evidence, that you are doing the Will of Christ : and then you may, with a cheerful Mind, submit to whatever Inconvenience shall arise from so doing.

Nay, upon your Fidelity to your Lord and Saviour, you are bound, not to yield to all the Friends in the World, in any Matter wherein *their Will* is contrary to *his*. *He that loveth Father or Mother more than me, is not worthy of me.* — *And he that taketh not his Cross, and followeth me, is not worthy of me*^m. Nor will impartial Persons, who duly regard the Sacredness of Conscience, be disgusted at your following the Light of your own Minds, though it should lead you in a Way different from theirs. And I must add : many are in no Danger of incurring the Displeasure of Friends ; but their Friends, who have the tenderest Concern for them, would greatly rejoice to find them willing to join themselves to the Lord in the baptismal Covenant.

^m Matt. x. 37, 38.

II. Consider your own Advantage, as herein greatly concern'd. The *Command of Christ* (as has been observed) should be sufficient, though nothing else were to be urged. But he hath given us no *arbitrary* Precepts; none but such whose *Significancy* is made manifest, and such as are adapted to our Benefit. Such are the two positive Institutions of our Religion, *Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*. As for *Baptism*, it is administer'd for the Remission of Sins, as has been shown before. And moreover, our Lord saysⁿ, *Except a Man be born of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*. Which Words they will do well to consider, who acknowledging the Baptism of Water

ⁿ John iii. 5.

• The *Quaker* says, "*Water Baptism* is the Baptism of *John*; but Christian Baptism is only that of the *Spirit*." Which Opinion is, to a Demonstration, proved wrong, from that single Passage in *Acts* x. 47, 48. *Can any Man forbid Water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the holy Ghost as well as we. And he commanded them to be baptized in the Name of the Lord*. On which Passage I shall only make this obvious Remark: *viz.* St. *Peter* is so far from accounting that the Baptism of the *Spirit* makes the

ter to be a Law of Christ's Kingdom, yet never receive it.

Now since Baptism is for the Remission of Sins, is not this an Advantage worthy of your glad Acceptance? And since the Word of God directs you not only to *repent*, but to repent and be *baptized, for the Remission of Sins*; if you would reasonably expect the *Benefit*, you must observe the *Injunction*. In Things of positive Institution, you have nothing to do but to comply with the Direction of the Institutor, as to the End and Manner of what he hath appointed: and not to do so, is manifest Disobedience. Consider again: Baptism is the regular Way of your Admission into the *Church of Christ*, and to the Privilege of that other Ordinance, the Lord's Supper. And should it not touch your Hearts with Grief and Shame, that while others have their Seasons of celebrating this Memorial of the Love of Christ, you should stand off, as though you had no Concern and Interest in the Matter? *Do*

the Baptism of *Water* needless, that, on the direct contrary, he urges their having already received the *Spirit*, as the very Reason why they ought to be baptized with *Water*.

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this, said the Saviour, *in Remembrance of me* ^p. This he ordained, just before his dying a Sacrifice for us. And do you hope to receive the Benefit of this Sacrifice? Why then will you not come and feed this Hope, by attending the *Memorial* of the Sacrifice? And may it not be asked, where is your Love to your Saviour; when you will not do such easy Service, to keep up the Remembrance of *his* Love? If all should act like you, this blessed Memorial of our dying Lord would be lost and banished from the Earth. I shall only add: if you are ashamed to profess your Subjection to Christ, in the Way which you believe he hath ordained; have you not some Reason to fear that Censure; *Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me, and of my Words, in this adulterous and sinful Generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father with his holy Angels* ^q?

III. Consider that *your Example may be profitable unto others*. You know not how many may be provoked by your

^p Luke xxii. 19.

^q Mark viii. 38.

Zeal and Forwardness, *to go and do likewise*. And how happy is it, to be instrumental, by good Example, of drawing others into the Way of God! As, on the other Hand, it is a miserable Circumstance to be the Instrument, by *ill* Example, of engaging others to work Wickedness.

I would especially urge it on *young* Persons, to show a good Pattern in this Matter. There seems, generally, the most Likelihood of prevailing on such. When Men proceed on toward old Age, in a Neglect of Religion and the Ordinance of the Gospel, it is not often they come into them afterwards: an earthly Temper is more and more rooted with their growing Years. However, a shining Example in younger Persons may, possibly, shame their Elders out of their long Neglect: for, when Youth are zealous to enter into the Kingdom of the Gospel, and thus early show their Wisdom in being Candidates for Heaven; such a good Sight is an obvious and strong Rebuke unto their *Fathers* in Age; that having lived so long, they are not yet so much as *enter'd* Disciples of Jesus. What do such think of Religion, and the Institutions

tions of the Gospel? Will they not consider, though come almost to the End of Life, that this Life is a State of Probation? — that there is an Eternity to come? — that the all-seeing God will bring them unto Judgment? and, that *to seek the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness*, is their principal Interest?

But as for you *young* Persons: as now is your *best* Time to enter upon Religion, and you cannot be too early in living to God, and taking Care for Eternity; so our Eyes must be on *you*, to be the Examples and Supports of Religion, in the *rising Generation*? Let nothing therefore divert you from *remembering your Creator now in the Days of your Youth*, and giving yourselves to the Lord Jesus, in the Manner he hath appointed. Show a laudable Zeal to become the *Lights of the World*: and let the Wickedness of the Age, and its Indifference to Religion, provoke your Emulation to make a Stand against it. Dare to distinguish yourselves, where the Will of God, the Cause of Piety and Virtue, and the Happiness of

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your immortal Souls require it. *Save your selves from this untoward Generation.*

So much for the Exhortation to Baptism. The Success of it must depend on the Blessing of God, and your serious Consideration.

I will only add this one Direction: that if any Person be seriously thoughtful about *Baptism*, and desirous of it, he will do well to open his Mind to the *Minister*; who, if he be a Lover of Souls, will gladly assist and encourage in this and every other good Work.

Acts ii. 40.

C H A P. V.

*A SERIOUS ADDRESS to such as
have been baptized.*

Dear Brethren.

INasmuch as by Baptism you have taken upon you the Christian Profession, wherein to acquit your selves well, is of the greatest Consequence; it will not, I presume, be thought an unsuitable Conclusion of this Treatise, to offer a few Words unto you, by way of Exhortation, to *walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith you are called.*

You have done well, in devoting your selves to Christ in the Way and Manner he hath appointed: and every one, who is baptized into him, with Understanding and Sincerity, hath great Reason *to go on his Way rejoicing*^t. You are engaged in a Service, which (if you

^t Acts viii. 39.

are faithful in it) shall be crowned with eternal Glory. And since we are capable, and have a Prospect of *such* a Prize; without all Controversy, he is the only wise Man, who is in earnest concerned, and careful to obtain it. Every one will be thoroughly sensible of this some Time or other: 'tis well for those who are practically convinced of it in Season, so as to live by it.

You need not Information of this sad Truth; that many call *Christ Lord* and *Master*, who, in *Works*, deny him; that many have the *Form of Godliness*, who deny the *Power of it*. And you very well know what you solemnly promised in your Baptism: viz. *to die unto Sin, and to walk in Newness of Life*.

You have enter'd your selves Members of the *Church-Militant*, in hope to share, one Day, in the Glory and Felicity of the *Church-Triumphant*. Now, it will be a deplorable Case indeed, if any of you, who are by Profession, *Children of the Kingdom*, should finally be cast out. Surely it becomes us all, to take great Heed lest this be our Case. *"Let us fear, lest a Promise being*

^u Heb. iv. 1.

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left us of entring into Rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. Since the Prize set before us is so precious and valuable; since it will make us rich and blessed for ever; and since, if we come short of it, we are undone for ever; so important a Case demands our utmost Attention. Therefore, so run that ye may obtain^w. Let us lay aside every Weight, and the Sin that doth so easily beset us; and let us run with Patience the Race set before us^x.

How concerned and busy are Men about the Things of the present World! how watchful of their secular Interest! studious to promote it! sparing no Pains and Self-denial; and running many and great Hazards for the Sake of it! Now, though *such* Care and Labour succeed according to desire; what comes of it? what's the End? Why, *the Time is short, and the Fashion of this World passeth away.* Mankind are continually posting into Eternity, and leaving their Cares and their Acquisitions unto others. But the *Christian* Calling is infinitely more important and profitable: and therefore, have we not, Fellow-Christi-

^w 1 Cor. ix. 24.^x Heb. xii. 1.

ans, abundant Room for Shame and Amazement at our selves, that we have so little Concern and Zeal about our spiritual Interest? that we are so little on our Guard against such Things as are prejudicial and destructive to it? when, at the same Time, we profess to believe, the Care of the Soul is *the one Thing needful*; and know, that the End of sincere and diligent Adherence to Religion shall be *Fulness of Joy, and Pleasures for evermore*. Surely 'tis highly reasonable and necessary, that *we look less at the Things which are seen, and more at the Things which are not seen: because the Things which are seen are Temporal; but the Things which are not seen are Eternal*.

But I would not stop short in these few general Hints, in a Matter of the greatest Moment unto all that are enter'd into the *Christian Profession*. Permit me therefore to make a little Enlargement, and to become your humble and affectionate Monitor in a few Particulars: and may divine Grace render it successful, to the Furtherance of your Salvation!

2 Cor. iv. 18.

H

I. As

I. As your's is the Baptism of *Repentance*, and therein you have solemnly professed, and stipulated to renounce the Devil and all his Works; therefore *bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance*.

You will not think this an unnecessary Piece of Counsel, when you call to mind what Numbers of Professors there are, whose Conduct beareth Witness against them, that they are the *Enemies of the Cross of Christ*; whose God is their Belly, who mind earthly Things, whose End therefore shall be *Destruction*². They are meer Worldlings and Sensualists, and *savour not the Things of God*. Propose to them an advantageous Scheme, to buy or sell, and get Gain; and you have their Ear, and their whole Heart: but counsel them to *lay up Treasure in Heaven*, and to *grow rich towards God*; and in this Matter 'tis with Difficulty you obtain their Attention; or your most chosen Words *pass away as a Tale that is told*. Propose to them the bestowing a little Money on a good Work of Piety or Charity; and the very

² Phil. iii. 18, 19.

Mention of it puts them out of Humour: but let a Temptation of worldly Profit come in their Way; and without much Difficulty or Hesitation they will surrender for it Honesty and a good Conscience. Tell them of good eating, and drinking; and they *relish* your Discourse: but put them in mind of *hungering and thirsting after Righteousness*; and this no more suits their Taste, than a blind Man is fit to judge of Colours. Such, 'tis too manifest, is the Temper and Way of many professed Christians. They set their Affection, *not on Things above, but on Things on the Earth*. The Profits, or the Pleasures of the World have their whole Heart.

Now, let us look well to our selves, that we be not Christians of this Sort. Consider, I intreat you, that *the Grace of God* (or the Gospel into which you have been baptized) *teacheth* and commands you, *that denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, you should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present World*^a: and consider, that without such a Life, be your Profession what it will, 'tis impossible you should be saved.

^a Tit. ii. 11, 12.

Therefore, whatever is contrary to Temperance and Purity, to Righteousness and Honesty, to Piety and Godliness; you must resist and cast off, as the *unfruitful Works of Darkness*, and dangerous to your Salvation.

Whosoever hath taken upon him the Christian Calling, and professeth his Design is for Heaven, let him think, how it is possible, *that* Man should be a good *Christian*, and really in the Way to Heaven; who, instead of *keeping the Body under*, and *bringing it into Subjection*, indulgeth it to Intemperance and Lust. If even St. Paul said, *I keep under my Body, and bring it into Subjection, lest that by any Means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a Castaway*^b; ought not they to question the Goodness of their State, and to fear their being *Castaways*, who make the Body their principal Concern, and indulge their Appetites and Passions to Gluttony, and Drunkenness, and Uncleanliness?

Consider again: How can *he* have *Treasure in Heaven*, who takes no Care to mortify his Affection to *this World*?

^b 1 Cor. ix. 27.

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whose Heart is so intirely possess'd with the Love of it, that there is no Place for the Love of God? Is it possible He should have Treasure in Heaven, and be accepted of God, (the God of Truth and Righteousness) who so loves the Gain of this World, as to defraud and over-reach, oppress and lye for the Sake of it? No: they who are set on being rich at this Rate, fall into Temptation and a Snare, and into many foolish and hurtful Lusts, which drown Men in Destruction and Perdition^c.

If ever then you mean to obtain the End of your Faith, even the Salvation of your Souls^d, you must make a faithful Stand against Sin. Therefore, narrowly watch your own Temper and Conduct: compare them frequently with the Rule of the Gospel, by which you are to be judged: endeavour to discover every Thing inconsistent with your holy Profession: above all, have an Eye to what may emphatically be called your Iniquity; and watch and pray against it. Take the holy Psalmist for an Example, who prays thus: Search me O God, and know my Heart;

^c 1 Tim. vi. 9.

^d 1 Pet. i. 9.

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try me, and know my Thoughts; and see if there be any wicked Way in me, and lead me in the Way everlasting.

And here let me add a few Words concerning *Declensions* and *Backsliding*. Some there are, as has been already observed, who have solemnly dedicated themselves unto the *Lord*, to be his dutiful Servants; but they prove unfaithful to their Covenant, and instead of serving him, become the Servants of diverse Lusts and Pleasures. Notwithstanding their holy Profession, and the Regularity and Goodness of their Conduct for a Season; they have now cast off their Allegiance and Loyalty; they have made an open Revolt from their heavenly King, and are gone over to the Interests of Sin and Satan. Such are in a strong Sense *Backsliders*; for Sin hath evidently the *Dominion* over them; *they have left off to be wise, and to do good*^e. Such have the strongest and most pressing Reason to *remember from whence they are fallen, and repent, and do the first Works*^f. And since God is graciously pleased to invite Back-

^e Psal. cxxxix. 23, 24.

^f Psal. xxxvi. 3.

^g Rev. ii. 5.

sliders to a Return, saying, *Return ye backsliding Children, and I will heal your Backslidings*; how glad should they be of such an Invitation; and how ready to reply with their whole Heart, *Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God^h*.

But further: Whereas backsliding admits of various Degrees; and the lesser Steps of it lead on to greater; we shall do well to examine and see whether, though we may not have backsliden so grossly, we are not however chargeable with some smaller Measures of it. Let us then seriously put to our selves some such Questions as these. Cannot I remember the Time, when I had a greater Zeal for God, than I find at present? Is not my Heart, of late, grown colder and more indifferent to the Things of Religion than formerly? May not my God justly rebuke me with, *I remember the Kindness of thy Youth, the Love of thine Espousalsⁱ*? Had I not once a more constant and lively Sense of the Eye of God upon me, so as to walk with greater Care and Circumspection before him than I have of late? Where

^h Jer. iii. 22.

ⁱ Jer. ii. 2.

is that Zeal and conscientious Concern I had, to embrace all Opportunities of attending the Worship of *God*? I was careful to order my secular Affairs so, that I might be at Liberty to attend the Affairs of my Soul, and the Business of Religion: but what frivolous Excuses do now detain me from the Devotion of the Closet, and the Service of the Sanctuary? Business, which I should make no Difficulty to defer for the Sake of a merry Meeting, or an Hour in idle Company, is reckoned *too important* to be laid aside for the Sake of spending an Hour in the Service of my God! Am not I conscious there was a Time, when the Word of the Lord was precious to me? when I listen'd to it with Diligence, and received it in Love; careful to treasure it up in my Heart; to reflect upon, and digest it as the Nourishment of my Soul; and to order my Conversation according to its holy Instructions? But now, alas! with what Indifference do I receive the most affecting Doctrines! The *Threats* of the divine Word, how little am I aw'd by them! Its great and precious *Promises*, how little do they provoke my Desire and Emulation to be a Sharer in them!

Yea,

Yea, while Truths of the greatest Concernment to my Soul are discoursed of, am I not often *asleep*, and so have put my self out of all Possibility of being edified by them? or, if I have listen'd to the Preacher, and been taken with the Discourse; yet has not my Care been too much like that of the *Israelites*, in relation to the Prophet, to whom God speaketh thus: *Lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely Song, of one that hath a pleasant Voice, and can play well on an Instrument; they hear thy Words,* BUT THEY WILL NOT DO THEM^k. So, though I have heard my Faults reprov'd, and my Conscience hath born Witness to the Justness of the Rebuke; yet have not I neglected a Reformation? and has not the Discourse, which *peculiarly suited* my Case, *passed away*, like others, *as a Tale that is told*?

Such like Inquiries, it may be exceeding useful to make; charging home upon our selves the Declensions and Backslidings which, on Reflection, we are conscious of; or, on the other Hand, thanking God and taking Comfort, if we find that, upon the whole,

^k Ezek. xxxiii. 32.

we have not lost, but rather got Ground in Religion.

But as for those who are fallen away from the Piety and Virtue of their holy Profession; among the various Considerations that might be offer'd to induce them to Repentance, let me briefly suggest these following.

1. By continuing in your Sin, you continue to bid him Defiance, who hath an absolute Power over you. And how irrational and mad is the Conduct, to go on to provoke him, who is able to crush you in a Moment! *Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he? Who hath harden'd himself against him, and hath prospered? Which removeth the Mountains, and they know not: which overturneth them in his Anger: which shaketh the Earth out of her Place, and the Pillars thereof tremble: which commandeth the Sun, and it riseth not: and sealeth up the Stars^m.* The Day approacheth, when God Almighty will come forth to pour Vengeance on the Incurable. And can thine Heart endure, or can thine Hands be strong, in the Day that

^l 1 Cor. x. 22.

^m Job ix. 4, 5, 6, 7.

he shall deal with theeⁿ? All the Enemies of God shall be as Stubble; the Fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the Power of the Flame^o.

2. Surely it is meet you should not go on to affront and displease your best Benefactor. The Forbearance and Goodness of God should constrain you to present your Bodies a living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable Service^p. It is vile Ingratitude, if, because Sentence against our evil Works is not executed speedily, therefore our Hearts are fully set to do evil. God waiteth, not that we should add Iniquity unto Iniquity; but that we may have Opportunity to think on our Ways, and turn our Feet unto his Testimonies^q. Let this be the Use you make of his merciful Forbearance; to seek him while he may be found, and to call upon him while he is near^r.

3. How much better was it, when you rejoiced in the Peace and Purity of

ⁿ Ezek. xxii. 14

^p Rom. xii. 1.

^r Isa. lv. 6.

^o Isa. xlvii. 14.

^q Psal. cxix. 59.

a good Conscience! Therefore endeavour to recover this Joy, by returning from your Transgressions. The wise Man observes, *One Sinner destroyeth much good*^a. So it may be said of Sin: it destroyeth much good. The Pleasure or Profit of it is but slight and short: but what a lasting Sting, and Load of Sorrow, does it leave upon the Mind! which Load there is no Way to remove, but by sound Repentance. And what a Happiness should the Transgressor esteem it, that *whoso confesseth and forsaketh, shall have Mercy*^b! *Return therefore ye backsliding Children, and God will heal your Backslidings*^c.

4. I might urge the *Detestableness and Deformity of Vice*, as a Reason for the Backsliders return from it. Sin is the greatest *Disgrace and Shame* of our Nature. And this, many are so sensible of, as to be very solicitous to hide their Crimes, and not a little confounded when they are brought to light. But if they are so conscious of the Baseness and Scandal of Iniquity, that they would not commit it in the Observation of their Fellow-Crea-

^a Eccles. ix. 18.

^b Jer. iii. 22.

^c Prov. xxviii. 13.

tures ; how much greater Reason have they to be withheld from it by the Consideration of that Day, when the evil Deeds of Transgressors, even their most *bidden Works of Darknes*, shall be all brought forth to light before God, Angels, and Men, to their utter Confusion and Amazement !

Finally : You should *make haste*, and *not delay* to return from Iniquity ; because Delays here are attended with the greatest Hazard and Mischief. Sin indulged, like a growing Disease of the Body, acquires new Strength, and more and more debilitates the Person distemper'd. Any vicious Practice, the more it is indulged, improves towards a confirmed Habit, and, of Consequence, is the harder to be cured. Experience will bear Witness to the Truth of that Passage : *Can the Ethiopian change his Skin, or the Leopard his Spots ? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil*^w. And woful indeed is the State of that Man, who is come to such a Pass, that, morally speaking, *he cannot cease from Sin*^x !

^w Jer. xiii. 23.

^x 2 Pet. ii. 14.

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Moreover: *Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I will not offend any more; because, if you neglect the present Opportunity, you know not whether you shall have another. Now, God saith, Return thou backsliding Israel, and I will not cause mine Anger to fall upon you*: but if the merciful Invitation should be neglected, *even but for this Day*, to Morrow may set you beyond all Hope of being ever called more. And is *eternal Perdition* so trifling and harmless a Thing, that you need not dread the Hazard of falling into it? or is *eternal Life* of such small Consequence, that you need not be in haste to secure it? This you cannot imagine. *To Day, therefore, if ye will hear his Voice, harden not your Hearts*².

II. *As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ*¹. I allow, it appears from the Context, that St. Paul useth here the Metaphor of *putting on Christ*, rather to express the Privilege than the Duty of baptized Christians. Accordingly, a celebrated

¹ Jer. iii. 12.
² Gal. iii. 27.

² Heb. iv. 7.

Epofitor ^b gives the Meaning of the Apostle thus. "He here tells them, [the *Galatians*] "that by taking on "them the Profession of the Gospel, "*they have*, as it were, *put on Christ*; "so that to God, now looking on them, "there appears nothing but Christ. "They are, as it were, covered all "over with him, as a Man is with the "Clothes he hath put on. And hence "he says in the next Verse, that *they* "*are all one in Christ Jesus*, as if there "were but one Person."

But inasmuch as this Apostle makes Use of the same Metaphor in another Place, in exhorting Christian Professors to their *Duty* ^c; I shall take the Liberty to consider it in this View.

Since then you have by Profession *put on Christ*, walk in him. Consider and regard him as your *Master*, and your *Example*. As your *Master*, he hath given Doctrines and Precepts of the most solid Piety, and the most exalted and universal Virtue and Goodness. Read and Study his Sermon on the Mount, in *Matthew* v, vi, and vii. Read and consider it so often and atten-

^b Locke.

^c Rom. xiii. 14.

tively, as to be intimately acquainted with its excellent Instructions. Who teacheth like him? *There* you will best learn, on *what* Things 'tis fit you should employ your greatest Zeal and Care: viz. on being *poor in Spirit*: on *mourning for Sin*: on *Meekness*, and *hungering and thirsting after Righteousness*: on *Purity of Heart*, and *Peaceableness*: on *glorifying God*, and *commending his Religion to Men by good Works*: on *Self-denial and Mortification*: on *Prayer*, and *laying up Treasure in Heaven*: on *loving Enemies*, *rendering good for evil*: and on being *free from Censoriousness*, and *uncharitable Judging*. These, and such like, are the substantial Virtues, which Christ our Master hath taught us: enforcing them with this strong Recommendation: *Whosoever heareth these Sayings of mine, and doth them, I will liken him unto a wise Man, which built his House upon a Rock. And the Rain descended, and the Floods came, and the Winds blew, and beat upon that House, and it fell not; for it was founded upon a Rock. And every one that heareth these Sayings of mine, and doth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish Man, which built his House upon the Sand: and*
the

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the Rain descended, and the Floods came, and the Winds blew, and beat upon that House; and it fell; and great was the Fall of it^d.

'Tis obvious to remark here, that were the Zeal of Christians more directed to this *practical* Religion, and less occupied in *doubtful Disputations*, which gender Strife and Envy; the Cause of real Christianity (which consists not in Speculation and Dispute, but Practice) would appear with a better Face than it does at present; when, alas! the Subjects of *the Prince of Peace* are so forward to bitter Contentions, and to bite and devour one another!

Christian, leave *wrangling* and *bitter Zeal* to those, who have so ill-learned Christ, as to imagine, or act as if they imagin'd, *the Wrath of Man worketh the Righteousness of God*, and who can better bear with a Man's being corrupt in his *Morals*, than a Dissenter from the distinguishing *Opinions* of *their Party*. But exercise thy self rather unto *Godliness*^e. And remember the Words of thy Lord; *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Hea-*

^d Matt. vii. 24, &c.

^e 1 Tim. iv. 7.

ven; but he that doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven^f. Our rising out of the Water in Baptism typifies our rising to Newness of Life. If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those Things which are above^g.

In ancient Times; ^h “ After the Person was baptized, he had a *white Garment* put upon him, to denote his having put off the *Lusts* of the Flesh, his being *washed* from the Filth and Defilement of his former Sins, and his Resolution to maintain a Life of unspotted Innocence and Purity, according to that solemn and strict Engagement which, in *Baptism*, he had taken upon him. In this they alluded to that of the Apostle, *That as many as are baptized into Christ, have put on Christ*; i. e. have engaged in that strict and holy Course of Life, which he, both by his Doctrine and Example, has left to the World. Accordingly Persons baptized are, both by the Apostle, and, by the Greek Fathers, called *Φωτισμένοι*, or the *En-*

^f Matt. vii. 21.

^g Coloss. iii. 1.

^h Cave's *Primitive Christianity*, p. 216, 217. Edit. 5.

— *lightened*;

“lightened; because they now profes-
 “sed that they were become the Chil-
 “dren of the Light, and of the Day.
 “Therefore the white Garment was wont
 “to be deliver’d to them, with such a
 “Charge as this: *Receive the white*
 “*and immaculate Garment; and bring*
 “*it forth without Spot before the Tri-*
 “*bunal of our Lord Jesus Christ, that*
 “*thou mayst have eternal Life. A-*
 “*men.*”

Again: Consider Christ as your *Ex-*
ample: and you will find that, to the
 utmost Advantage, he recommends his
*Doctrin*e by the perfect Goodness of his
Life. Does he instruct us to be chiefly
 careful to *lay up Treasure in Heaven*,
 and to practise *Self-denial* for the sake
 of entering into the *Kingdom of God*?
 He himself, *for the Joy set before him*,
*endured the Cross, and despised the Shame*¹.
 Does he command us to be zealous in
 doing the *Work of God*? *My Meat*,
 saith he, *is to do the Will of him that*
*sent me, and to finish his Work*². And
 just at the Close of Life, he could ap-
 peal to God his Father, *I have glori-*
fied thee on the Earth, I have finished

¹ Heb. xii. 2.

² John iv. 34.

the Work which thou gavest me to do! Does he call his Disciples to *Devotion*, and to *worship* God who is a Spirit, in *Spirit and in Truth*? He himself prayed in such a Manner, that God heard him always: and to encourage extraordinary Measures of Devotion, upon special and extraordinary Occasions, he continued all Night in Prayer to God^m, [or in the Oratory of Godⁿ] and offered up Prayers and Supplications, with strong Crying and Tears^o. Does he enjoin it on his Disciples, to be *harmless*, and *without Guile*? He was *holy*, *harmless*, *undefiled*, and *separate from Sinners*^p. He did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth^q. Are we commanded to be ready as we have Opportunity, to do good unto all Men: and even to love our Enemies, and render Good for Evil? Of all this Christ is an illustrious Example: who went about doing Good; who died for Sinners, the Just for the Unjust; and prayed for his Enemies, at the very Time when,

^j John xvii. 4.^m Luke vi. 12.ⁿ ΕΥ ΤΗ ΠΡΟΣΕΥΧΗ 78. Θεοῦ^o Heb. iv. 7.^p Heb. vii. 26.^q 1 Pet. ii. 22.

through their Malice, he was suffering the Ignominy and Tortures of the Cross. *Father, saith he, forgive them, for they know not what they do^r.*

But not to enumerate all the Particulars, wherein Jesus is to be consider'd and attended to as our *Example*; I shall mention only this further. Does he command his Followers to be *humble* and *meek*? He hath strongly recommended it in his own *Practice* and *Conduct*. *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in Heart^s. When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threaten'd not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously^r.*

Now, inasmuch as you are professed Disciples of so good a Master, be zealous to walk worthy of him, by a steadfast Adherence to his *Precepts*, and a diligent Study and Imitation of his *Example*. *Be blameless and harmless, the Sons of God without Rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse Generation, shining among them as Lights in the World^u.*

^r Luke xxiii. 34.

^s 1 Pet. ii. 23.

^r Matt. xi. 29.

^u Phil. ii. 15.

III. *You are all baptized into one Body^w: therefore have an affectionate Regard one for another, and live in Peace and Harmony, as being Members one of another.* Christians of high Rank, the most exalted in Station, or Abilities, must not neglect and despise the Meanest. *The Head cannot say to the Feet, I have no need of you^x. All the Members, being many, are one Body: therefore let there be no Schism [or Division] in the Body; but let the Members have the same Care one for another. And whether one Member suffer, let all the Members sympathize with it; or one Member be honoured, all the Members rejoice with it^y.* It is walking worthy of the Vocation wherewith we are called, to behave *with all Lowliness and Meekness, with Long-suffering, forbearing one another in Love; endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace^z.* But whereas, on occasion of different Sentiments in Matters of Religion, we are too apt to fall into

^w 1 Cor. xii. 13.

^x 1 Cor. xii. 21.

^y 1 Cor. xii. 12, 25, 26.

^z Eph. iv.

1, 2, 3.

a Disunion of *Heart* and *Affection*, and to forget that great Rule of Christianity, *Love as Brethren*; should it be inquired, how shall we do our Part to prevent or cure such Division and Discord in the Body of Christ? I would humbly answer: not by insisting on *Uniformity* of Judgment and Profession; but by allowing others the same Liberty of judging for *themselves* as we claim, and think we have a Right to claim for *our selves*; and by forbearing to be angry, or offended at them for differing from *us*, as we *rightly* and readily conclude, they ought not to be offended at our differing from *them*. No Man hath his Judgment at Will: and as long as we have different Capacities, different Educations, and various Prejudices, (from which, who can say he is perfectly purged?) we shall unavoidably think and judge differently.

But though, in this imperfect State, it may not be expected that good Men should have a Sameness of Judgment; yet, may they not be knit together in the *Bond of Peace*, and *love as Brethren*? I hope they may: I hope there is nothing in the *Nature of Things*, or in the Nature of our *Religion*, to forbid it.

it. It is not *necessary* we should live at Variance, *provoking one another, envying one another*. And since to have our Animosities banished, and Peace and Love maintained, is what every one, animated with a true Gospel Spirit, wishes, and would rejoice to have accomplished: let us show that such a Spirit dwells in us, by our pursuing the best and only Method for such Concord; viz. what the *inspired Paul* directs to, *Rom. xiv. Him that is weak in the Faith receive you; but not to doubtful Disputations.* — Let every Man be fully persuaded in his own Mind. — But why dost thou judge thy Brother, or why dost thou set at nought thy Brother? for we shall all stand before the Judgment-seat of Christ. Every one of us shall give Account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no Man put a Stumbling-block, or an Occasion to fall, in his Brother's Way. “How happily, (says the late excellent Dr. Evans ^a) “would the Face of the “Christian Church be alter'd, if all the “Members of it, on all hands, would

^a *Serm. on Peaceableness, Vol. II.*

“ make it a Law to themselves, charitably to think others as sincere in their Searches after Truth, as we profess to be in ours, though they cannot see with our Eyes; to avoid censuring others for differing from us, as we should complain of their censuring us, where we think we are in the right; to remember that they have a Right to judge for themselves, as well as we, and that we are no more infallible than they; and hereupon to treat one another with brotherly Love, notwithstanding our different Persuasions!

“ These Things, accompanied with a Care to manage Disputes in Religion, when they fall out, with Temper and Moderation; to *give a Reason of our Hope* and Persuasion, *with Meekness and Fear*; and with a Readiness to allow others to give a Reason of their Persuasions without taking Offence at it, as we expect the like our selves: these Things, I say, would go farthest to heal the Breaches of the Church: and I doubt they will hardly be healed in this World by any other way.”

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Let us take care, that our Zeal be according to Knowledge; and then it will be well proportioned, and peaceable. Prove and form it by the Standard the Apostle James produceth. *Who is a wise Man, and endued with Knowledge amongst you? let him show, out of a good Conversation, his Works with Meekness of Wisdom. But if ye have bitter Envy-ing and Strife in your Hearts, glory not, and lie not against the Truth. This Wisdom descendeth not from above; but is EARTHLY, SENSUAL, DEVILISH. For where Envy-ing and Strife is, there is Confusion, and every evil Work. But the Wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, without Partiality, and without Hypocrisy: and the Fruit of Righteousness is sown in Peace, of them that make Peace^a.*

I conclude this Head with that wholesome Counsel of the pious Bishop Hall.
 “ Though our Brains be different, yet
 “ let our Hearts be one.”

^a James iii. 13, &c.

THE
CONCLUSION.

Remember, my Bethren, we are buried with him by Baptism into Death, that like as Christ was raised up from the Dead by the Glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in Newness of Life. — Let not Sin therefore reign in your mortal Body, that ye should obey it in the Lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your Members as Instruments of Unrighteousness unto Sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the Dead; and your Members as Instruments of Righteousness unto God^b. Your's is a most noble and advantageous Vocation: you are called to the Hope of an Inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away: therefore I beseech you, that ye walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith ye are

^b Rom. vi. 4, 12, 13.

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called^c. It is an holy Calling^d: let your Conversation therefore be holy. Then will the God of Holiness, according to his gracious and faithful Promise, receive you into his blissful Kingdom: into which there shall in no wise enter any Thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh Abomination, or maketh a Lye^e.

Now the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the Blood of the everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good Work to do his Will; working in you that which is well pleasing in his Sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be Glory for ever and ever. Amen^f.

^c Eph. iv. 1.

^d 2 Tim. i. 9.

^e Rev. xxi. 27.

^f Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

F I N I S.



